



HOUSTON FIRE DEPARTMENT PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICE NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
January 31, 2008

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MAN ARRESTED, CHARGED WITH FELONY ARSON IN CONNECTION WITH VACANT HOUSE FIRES

Investigators with the Houston Fire Department's Arson Division have arrested and charged a 51 year old homeless man with felony arson in connection with several fires in vacant houses in the Riverside Terrace neighborhood near Texas Southern University. Gary Dale Smith was arrested without incident in a vacant apartment in the 5000 block of Tierwester at about 9:00am Wednesday. Several citizens had identified the suspect as the person they seen in or near these vacant structures about the time of these fires. He has been charged with one count of arson at this time, however he admitted to, and led investigators to several vacant house fires in the area that he admitted to setting. He gave no logical reason for setting these fires other than the neighbors had harassed him for being in the houses. He was placed in The City of Houston Jail, no bond at this time.

Suspect: Gary Dale Smith

DOB 11/26/1956

Charged: One count of Arson of a residence at 3432 Palm St. This was the third arson fire in this vacant residence. These fires occurred on 11/29/2007, 1/28/2008, and 1/30/2008. Suspect admitted to but has not been charged at this time to setting fires in the following vacant houses:

3401 Palm St on 3/4/2007

3436 Palm St. on 5/7/2007

3418 Blodgett on 6/6/2007

5005 Tierwester on 1/24/2008